



SC Department of Employment and Workforce

## NEWS RELEASE

### Media Contact:

Heather Bianca

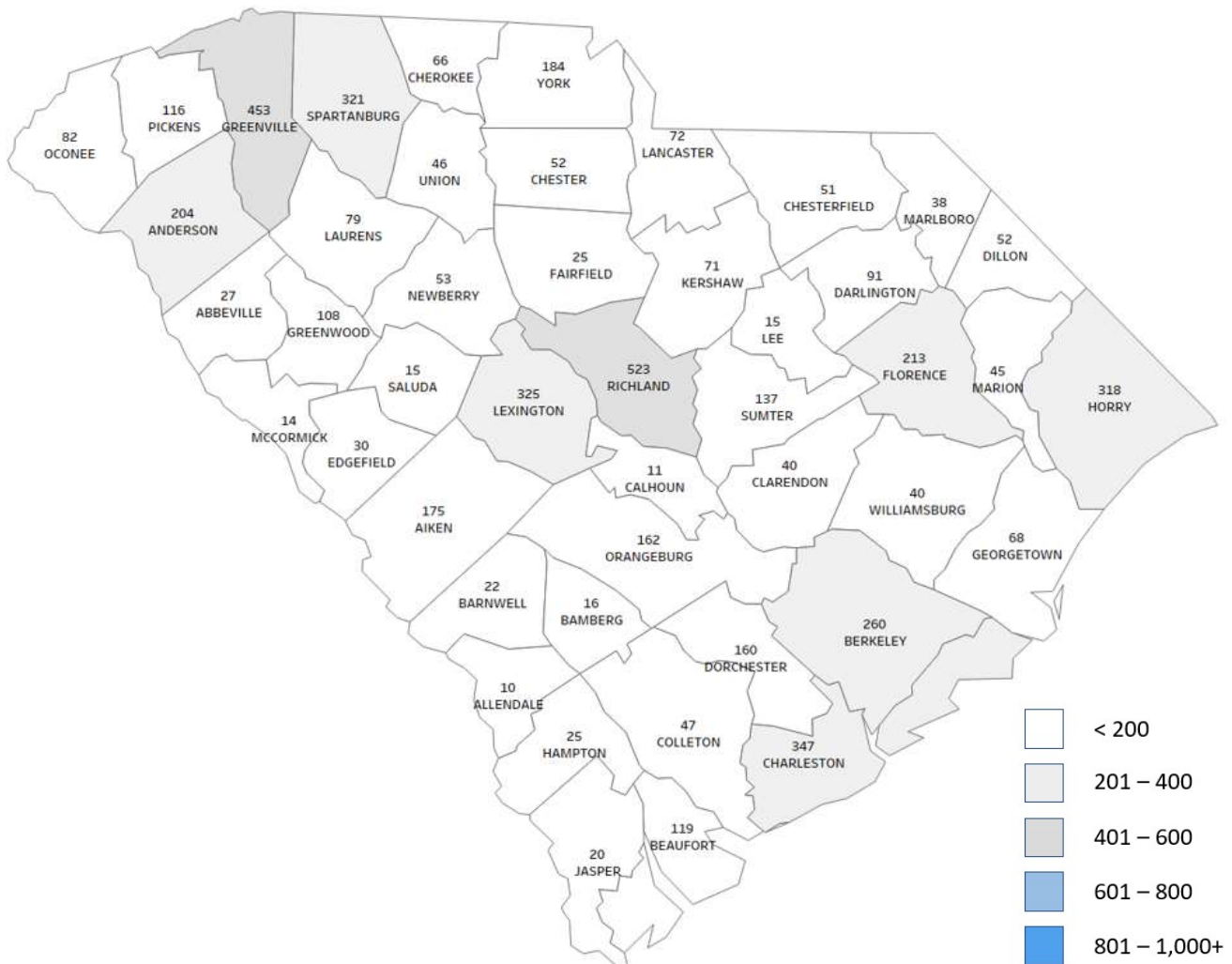
#### For Immediate Release

8:35 a.m. August 27, 2020

### South Carolina Initial Unemployment Insurance Claims Data Week Ending August 22, 2020

**Initial Claims:** For claim week ending August 22, 2020, the number of South Carolinians who filed their initial claim for unemployment insurance benefits is 5,524, a **decrease** of 1,731 initial claims from the week prior. This brings the initial claims total to 725,228 received since mid-March.

#### County Map (Intrastate)





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“We are happy to report the sharp decrease in initial claims filed last week. The 5,524 initial claims filed is the lowest since the pandemic began in the middle of March.

“But as mentioned in last week’s initial claims release, there is more value in focusing on the larger data picture over a month’s time than there is in the week-to-week micro changes that are a normal part of the initial claims trend. This data fluctuates even in non-pandemic times. So, while we are pleased to see the numbers trend back down this week, it’s the month-over-month data that is more meaningful and impactful,” states executive director Dan Ellzey.

“If we look at the data from claim weeks ending July 4 - July 25, the total is **61,931** initial claims filed. Reviewing the last four weeks of data (claim week ending August 1 – August 22) the total number of initial claims filed was **27,609**, a very significant decrease and a better indication of individuals returning to work,” continues Ellzey.

“We know there are still many people looking to regain employment and financial stability. The SC Works centers throughout the state have free resources, including in-person and virtual services. Explore weekly online webinars, get a resume revamp, practice your interview skills, search the state’s largest job posting website, SC Works Online Services (SCWOS), and consider upskilling and training opportunities that may be provided to you at no charge. You can also take advantage of the new drive-thru, walk-thru, and virtual job fairs being offered in a health conscious manner throughout the state. Please be encouraged that help is available, all you need to do is reach out,” concluded Ellzey.

### **Agency Responsiveness:**

- From March 15, 2020 to August 25, 2020, the agency has paid more than \$3.87 billion in a combination of South Carolina UI benefits, **Pandemic Unemployment Assistance** (for the self-employed and others), the **Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation** (\$600 per week) program, the **Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation** (extension of benefits for 13 weeks) program and **Extended Benefits** (Additional 16 weeks of benefits after PEUC).

Call center hours (1-866-831-1724)

**\*\*EXTENDED HOURS\*\*** MONDAY AND TUESDAY 8 a.m. – 8 p.m.

Wednesday - Friday 8 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Saturday 8 a.m. - NOON

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### **About the S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce**

The S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce is putting South Carolinians to work. The agency has four missions: (1) workforce development; (2) free job match employment services; (3) unemployment insurance; and (4) labor market information. All four missions contribute to workforce development. The agency is dedicated to advancing South Carolina through services and programs that meet the needs of our businesses, jobseekers and those looking to advance their careers.

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*\*An initial claim is a claim filed by an unemployed individual after a separation from an employer. The claimant requests a determination of basic eligibility for the UI program. When an initial claim is filed with a state, certain programmatic activities take place and these result in activity counts including the count of initial claims. The count of U.S. initial claims for unemployment insurance is a leading economic indicator because it is an indication of emerging labor market conditions in the country. However, these are weekly administrative data which are difficult to seasonally adjust, making the series subject to some volatility.*

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